SETH PARKER'S ALBUM

By SETH PARKER
of Jonesport, Maine

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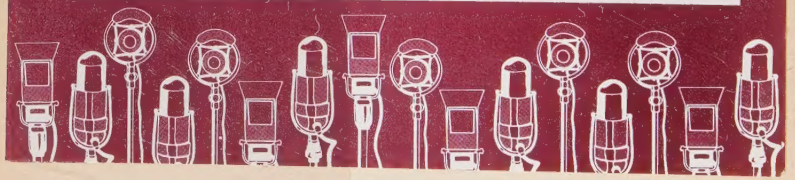

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By

SETH PARKER
of Jonesport, Maine

Illustrated by
FREDERICK A. LARSON

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This book is dedicated

To My Father

Dr. ALBERT J. LORD

SETH PARKER'S ALBUM

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A MITE TWISTED

I don't know as I've ever told you the story about old Silas Googins. Silas was quite a feller in his way, but I wouldn't say his way was always the best one.

Silas used to work for Deacon Withersby, doing odd jobs and chores about the place. Silas weren't never out of work, 'cause he could make a job last longer than most anybody I ever see.

According to all accounts he was quite a feller for cussing, too. I never listened to him myself over ten minutes, so I can't say for sure, but he was always going strong when I left him and never showed signs of weakening. The

poor old feller didn't seem to know any better and I can't seem to recollect any real good it done him.

Another thing about Silas was that he was scarter of the Lord than the Widder Ross was that she'd have on her house dress when the Parson come to call. When the church bells would ring, Silas would tremble and cover up his ears. When a thunder-storm would blow up, he'd run for the cellar and hide. If he passed a cemetery at night he'd shake like he had the St. Vitus dance and was trying to do a clog in the bargain.

Well, to make a long story short, the Deacon sent Silas up to the pond one summer to cut hoop-poles. It was about six miles by the woods road, so he took a tent with him and camped out.

Along the last of July come one of the worst thunder-storms Jonesport or Washington County ever had. It thundered and lightened something turrible and got blacker than a chunk of coal. The lightning was striking and the thunder was booming something awful.

Deacon Withersby was setting in the parlor watching out the front window when Sam Pea-

body come galloping up the road, driving his sorrel for dear life. He pulled around the corner and come up the drive. The Deacon went out to meet him.

"Hey, Deacon," yelled Sam, "Silas Googins' shack on the river road has been struck by lightning and smashed to smithereens."

"I do declare," says the Deacon, "I do declare. I'll go down and take a look."

He hitched up the mare and drove down to where the shanty was and when he got there it looked like the shack was trying to hide all over the medder. The lightning had struck it and there weren't a piece left big enough for a June-bug to set on.

The Deacon pulled around and headed up the woods road to the pond where Silas was cutting hoop-holes. The worst part of the storm was over, but now and then there was just a little put-put of thunder so you wouldn't forgit it, and the owls was "gee-hooing" and there was all sorts of noises. When he got up to the pond he looked around for Silas, but he weren't nowhere in sight.

"Silas, Silas, where be you?" he called.

The bushes moved a mite and out come

Silas's head with his teeth chattering fit to play a stuttering harmonica.

"That you, Deacon?" he says.

"Yes, Silas, it's me. Come out, I want to see you."

Silas pulled himself out and come over to the Deacon.

"Silas," says the Deacon, "I've got some bad news for you."

"Yeah, what is it?"

"Your shack on the river road has been struck by lightning and knocked to smithereens."

"I knew it, I knew it," says Silas. "The Lord tried to git me but he didn't know where I was."

Yes, Silas was quite a feller, but you know it always seemed to me he was a mite twisted. The Lord knew where to find Silas, but Silas didn't know where to find the Lord.

The Lord ain't just in lightning and cemeteries and things like that, but that's where lots of folks sort of place him.

I always reckoned it was a good deal like this:

Lots of folks don't turn to the Lord till they have to. When somebody dies they call on him, or when they're scart, or have something the matter with them. Just because they call on him at times like that they think of him along them lines, but the Lord ain't mournful.

It's real nice to call on the Lord when you're ailing, but there's lots of us that forgit to invite him along when we go picnicking or fishing or something. Seems to me I'd be a mite put out if I just got invitations to funerals and weren't never invited to parties.

I went out in the field with Zeb to see his crops and I says to him as we stood there, "This rain will do your crops a lot of good, Zeb."

"Yes," he says, "An hour of it will do more good in five minutes than a month of it would in a week at any other time."

The general gave the order at the Battle of Bull Run to git ready to retreat. The next time he turned around he saw Clem about two thirds the way across the medder. He galloped after him and had quite a lot of trouble catching up. "What's the matter with you?" he says. "Well," says Clem, "seeing I'm a little lame I thought I'd go ahead."

It seems to me that a lot of Christians are like youngsters on Fourth of July. They git so excited with the shouting of Halleluiahs and Amens and making noise, they forgit about the whole purpose of it, just as the shooters of fireworks forgit what they're celebrating.

You know, I've always cal'lated most folks was old-fashioned when you got to know them real well. Perhaps their trimmings ain't, but their hearts are. I don't care how big a man is, if you comb his hair long enough you'll find a mite of hay-seed somewhere.

Speaking about seeing the fog roll up the bay reminds me of something I once heard Captin Bang say. He said, "You know, Seth, one night when I was going to bed I looked out the winder and there was the wind blowing up the bay. The next morning I looked out and there was the ships tacking it down."

Speaking about exaggerating and lying reminds me that old man Hotchkins used to say, the trouble with lying was you had to git up so early in the morning to find out how the lie you told the day before was making out.

PUMPING

Funny, ain't it, how a little thing will stick in your mind for years while a big thing you want to remember will slip right through it.

I've just been thinking of that Sunday—oh, it must be close to twenty years ago now—that Peter Lufkin broke the organ handle. Jim Fletcher was the organist and Jim was such a feller for working his hands and feet and gitting lots of noises out of the organ at the same time that Peter had to work pretty steady to keep him supplied with air.

I can't seem to recollect the name of the parson at the time, but he was one of them that travel around from place to place. He could preach a pretty stirring sermon too when he put his mind to it. The words were always the same, but he'd shout in different places and it was kind of even-up between him and the organist so far as gitting compliments went.

The wind for the organ come from Dave Lufkin's youngest, Peter Lufkin. Peter was about fourteen and we gave him the job on account of the Lufkins having such hard scratching.

They lived up by the Widder Pease place, and it was a good six mile walk for Peter, but he didn't miss a Sunday. Seems to me it was fifteen cents a Sunday he got for the pumping.

The Sunday I have in mind the parson got all het up and give the sermon extry stirring and it was up to Jim Fletcher, the organist, to out-do himself. He took a number with a considerable amount of noise to it and when he clumb on top the organ stool and started it was just about nip and tuck between him and Peter so far as using up and supplying the air was concerned. Peter pumped fit to explode the bellows, but he'd no sooner git the air in before Jim would reach out and git a fist full of notes and all the air would be used up. He was playing for dear life when all of a sudden the air stopped coming. He kept right on grabbing notes, but it weren't no use and then he turned around, and everybody else turned around to look up at the back loft and see what the trouble was.

Well, sir, there was Peter standing up in the loft with the tears rolling down his cheeks and holding the busted pump handle over his head. The poor little feller was about broken-hearted.

I looked up at the parson and he come out of

his chair to the front part of the platform like he was inspired or was shot from a cannon.

"Feller church members," he says. "What's happened to-day is about as good a lesson for all of us as I ever see. You folks have come up and told me I preached stirring and you've told the organist he played beautiful, but there ain't none of us what have been up in the loft to cheer Peter."

There weren't a person in the whole church what went home to dinner that day before going up in the loft and seeing Peter.

Well, sir, I've never forgot the thought what come to me that Sunday. Without the little things you couldn't have the big ones. All of us can't preach sermons, but we can do our part by going and listening to them. Perhaps we all can't be missionaries, but we can pack barrels what go to them. A nice friendly smile and a slap on the back are to religion about what pumping is to the organ.

It's lots of fun sometimes to crawl inside another feller's heart and look out his eyes. It makes things seem a whole lot different.

When old acquaintances git together time goes like a dollar bill once you bust it.

Having a house upsot a mite is what makes a home out of it.

Not putting any money in the collection reminds me of a story they used to tell about Parson Ross over to Watkins Falls. They was taking up a collection for orphans and when the Parson got up to announce it he says, "Seeing as how the collection to-day is for orphans; widders and orphans will be exempt from this collection." The next Sunday he got up and said, "The widders and orphans will not be exempt from to-day's collection for no battle in the history of the country ever made as many widders and orphans as my announcement last Sunday."

The Widder Ross ain't been to church for sixteen years. You see it was this way.

She always used to sit in the nineth pew back on the right hand side, but when she moved away from town they gave that seat to the Hoopers.

When the Widder come back ten years later she wanted to git the same seat, and just because she couldn't git it she won't come at all.

I suppose she's got her reasons, but I've always found you could git about as much religion on the east side of the church as the west.

When you help a man that's got to be helped it's charity. When you help a man what ain't got to be helped it's friendly.

A WAGON-LOAD OF PRAYERS

Up Cherryfield way there was an old Parson and his wife who had had charge of the meeting-house there for a good many years. All the church could afford to pay them was about four hundred dollars a year, but they done some farming and gardening on the side and managed to git along pretty good.

They kept this up for quite a spell, but then there come a year when the Parson's crops went ke-flewy and he was up agin it for sure. The Deacons of the church seen how things was commencing to pinch though, so they set aside a night to go over to the Parson's and do some praying about it.

Well, when the evening they'd set aside come along, they all went over—that is, all except David Hutchins. David had said he didn't know as he could make it, and sure enough, when they all githered around the room, David was missing. Them what was there though was the finest prayers they had in the church, so they set to work to do a good job of it.

They was going full tilt when there come

a-knocking at the door. At fust they didn't pay no attention to it, hoping it would go away, but it didn't. Deacon Tuttle was right in the middle of praying for prosperity in general, but he yelled out in the same voice he was using, "Go along with you, we're praying for the Parson," and then he picked up his praying where he'd left off and went on without missing a beat.

He done that four or five times, but the knocking kept up so he says to the others, "Brethren, we'll have to disturb our endeavors long enough to open that door." With that he hopped up, and going across the room, swung it open.

There a-standing on the porch with his cap in his hand was David Hutchins' youngest boy, Bobby. He was an awful nice little feller, but just a mite scart at the way the Deacon had popped out at him.

"What do you mean by disturbing us while we're praying," says Deacon Tuttle. "Can't you see we're in operation here. What you want?"

"Paw couldn't come over to-night," says the little feller, "so he says to tell you he was sending along his prayers."

"Sending his prayers," says the Deacon. "What you talking about?"

"That's what he said to tell you," says the little feller. "He says to tell you he was sending his prayers."

"Well, where be they?" says the Deacon kind of puzzled.

"They're out front in the wagon," says the little feller.

Well, sir, the Deacons went out to the wagon and there they found a barrel of flour, a sack of apples, three bags of grain, and some shortening and what not.

They all pitched to and lugged it into the house without saying a word and the little feller drove off home. As the creak of the wagon wheels died out in the distance, the Deacons set down agin, but there didn't seem to be so much to say. One by one they excused themselves and kind of sheepish slunk out the door and went home to think it over.

After they'd gone the Parson and his wife went out to the kitchen and made some flapjacks out of the prayers that David had sent over to them, and they et them with a real nice feeling 'cause their stomachs had been kind of empty.

The next day the Deacons come back agin, but

this time it was with prayers in their hands and in their hearts instead of in their mouths.

When you talk to yourself you don't git in any arguments. You'd be surprised to know what good company yourself is.

An argument hind side to, looks a lot different than an argument front side before.

BETTER THAN EVER

Dad Higgins and Ma was an old couple who lived over Ellsworth way. They kept a little notion store. Perhaps you've seen it if you've drove along the harbor road down past the Swans Down Brook. It was a little shop that set way back up what you might call an alley.

Here for twenty years the old couple worked side by side waiting on the folks who came in and the rest the time making it cheery and bright with ferns and geraniums and all the fixings what go to make a place cozy.

They had a pretty hard time making both ends meet, but they was turrible happy and things went along smooth till Ma got sick and had to go to the hospital. She was there nigh onto six months too, and it seemed like a long time before she come home agin, but even then 'twas with the understanding that she could never go back to the store agin. All she was allowed to do was just spend the days setting in a chair by the winder.

She was turrible interested in the store though. Kept a-asking about how things was going, and

it seemed to be about the biggest enjoyment she had. When Dad would come home she'd say, "Dad, how was things at the store to-day?"

"Fust rate, Ma," he'd say, "better than ever."

"How are them geraniums I had in the winder box?"

"Geraniums?" Dad would say, "why they're sprouting all over the place."

"Is things just the way they was when I was there?" she'd say.

And then a mite of a shadow would come to the face of the old man and he'd say, "Things ain't never been just the same since you was there, Ma."

One morning she couldn't stand it no longer, so when it come along about noon she got her two canes and bundling up good and warm, 'cause 'twas cold, she hobbled out the back way and down across the medder to the store. It was at the other end of town and a good healthy walk, but she was spurred on 'cause she was going to see the place where she and Dad had worked so long together.

When she come to the corner of the street she sort of hung back. There was a funny feeling in her heart, but finally she got up enough

courage to peek around the corner, but she didn't go no further.

Seated on the curbstone with a tray of shoe-lacings in his lap was Dad. Around his feet was newspapers to keep off the bite of the cold wind what was sweeping down the street. An auto come by and he waved the shoe-lacings at it, but it went right on and Ma could see the folks inside laughing at the old man who was setting out there on the curbstone trying to sell them shoe-lacings.

She looked further up the street to where their store had been, but it was a fruit-stand now, run by somebody who'd come in from out of town. The geraniums was gone from the winder, and all she could see was the signs what said to buy this and buy that.

Slowly she turned around and made her way back up through the medder. There were tears in her eyes as she hobbled along, and she was thinking. Thinking of Dad down there with the tray of shoe-lacings, and it come to her that he'd had to sell the store to pay her keep at the hospital.

And it come to her too that it meant everything to Dad that she still thought and dreamt

of the store, the store where they'd worked side by side together.

Before she'd reached home she'd made up her mind to never let him know that she'd seen him selling the shoe-lacings on the curb.

That night when Dad come home and she was setting in her chair by the winder.

"Well, Dad," she says, "how was things at the store to-day?"

Putting his hand on her shoulder he smiled down at her: "Fust rate, Ma, better than ever."

Did you ever notice that it's the feller that does the loving that gits the most fun out of it?

We sold the old melodeon we had to the Widder Pease. It worked pretty good excepting for the flute stop. The widder said she wouldn't use the flute stop anyway. Her fust husband played the flute and her second husband played the melodeon. She said if she played the organ with the flute stop open and heard the flute and the melodeon at the same time it would remind her of both husbands and she'd feel like a bigamist.

The Lord's so busy I don't think it makes a whole lot of difference to him whether the church you come from is painted red, white or green and it wouldn't surprise me none if he'd welcome you just as much if the church you came from didn't have no paint at all. No, I ain't much for treading on other feller's religious toes.

You say that Home Sweet Home ain't a hymn? Well now, that may be, but as I recollect it a hymn is a tune that has to do with the Lord. There ain't never been a cathedral built so

beautiful or so large that you could find the Lord in it any quicker than in your own home.

It ain't a very good idea to leave your religion in the rack with the hymn book. It's a heap safer rule to take it home with you.

Parson Titcomb made fourteen calls last week. He woke up about eleven thirty Saturday night and remembered he'd only made thirteen, and for awhile he didn't know what to do, 'cause thirteen is a pretty bad number even for a parson. Everybody was in bed so Mrs. Titcomb got up and went downstairs and he called on her —making fourteen for the week.

Don't get so brim full of religion that you ain't got no room left for a heart.

Henry Saunders, dentist of Watkins Falls, gave a molasses pull to Jonesport folks on Monday. Eight of the folks had to go back to see Henry the next day.

THE ROAD TO THE RIGHT

Whoa! Whoa, Pansy—there now. What did you say, Mister? Yes—the best way to git there is to take the second road on the right. . . . Yes, I'm sort of plowing up this field here. . . . What say? . . . It's about twelve miles by the way the crow flies. Might be a mite longer in that auto of yours. . . . That's all right. You're ever so much obliged.

Eh? . . . I guess not, thank you just the same. . . . I don't nowadays. . . . No, I never did drink liquors . . . no, I ain't scart it'll git the best of me. . . . I just don't see no sense in it, that's all, and then besides it might git the best of Philip. . . . Don't you know Philip, the Widder's son? Of course yer don't, coming from the city. . . . You say you don't see what Philip has to do with it? Well, it's a good deal like this:

Seeing you don't know Ruth Fleming neither, I don't suppose you ever heard her tell it, but Ruth's a kindergarten teacher down to Boston, you know. She has a real quiet and comfortable way about her with children.

She was down to Boston last winter and when it come along spring she used to go out and set in the park. They have pigeons and ducks and geese and all sorts of things to amuse you, you know.

One of the things what sort of caught her eye was a little curly-headed feller that used to come out with his Ma and play around. He had lots of dolls he'd bring out with him; and Ruth says, to watch him with them dolls, you'd think they was made of gold or something. But the funniest part of it was that every doll had an arm missing.

It weren't long before the little feller meant a whole lot to her, and she went out and bought him the nicest cowboy doll there was in the whole city. She says when she give it to him he was so happy he just hopped right up and down, but he was as gentle with it as a miser with a soft-shelled egg.

What say? You don't see what this has to do with drinking liquor? Don't know as it has a thing to do with it, but I just felt a little story coming on and I thought I'd tell it to you. Seeing you've asked me, I'd just as soon tell you the rest of it.

The next day after Ruth give him the doll she went out to the park to watch him play. Right at the head of all the other dolls was the cowboy doll she'd give him, but the right arm was missing. Curiosity kind of got the better of her, so she went over and set down on the grass next to his Ma. They got to talking a mite and then Ruth says to her, "I've noticed all the right arms of Tommy's dolls are missing. It seems rather strange."

The other lady looked at her and her eyes was real soft. "Tommy adores his father," she says, "and they play together all the time. His father lost his right arm in the war and Tommy won't have a thing to do with a doll until he's broken off the right arm so it will be just like his father."

What say?

Boys sort of take a hankering after men folks you know. Now you take Philip, the Widder's son. He sets quite a bit of store by me. We talk things over together and then there's Sam up the road, and Billy Lufkin's youngest.

I don't suppose that drink you offered to give me would send me to fire and brimstone, but it might sort of head Philip that way.

Say, they're honking for you in that auto.

When you git to the fork in the road up there, better turn off to the right. It's kind of bumpy, but it's the best road in the long run . . . yes, turn to the right.

Git-ap there, Pansy!

George Saunders what runs the gasoline station and dickers in automobiles has just took in a dapple mare in exchange for an old Ford. He wants to sell the mare and he says if anybody wants a good second-handed horse in fust class condition he's got her.

Ed Cummings has been seen a couple of nights working out around his beehives. When Harry White asked Ed what he was doing, Ed says he was trying to cross the bees with lightning bugs so they could see to work all night.

Perhaps I'm a mite old-fashioned, but I enjoy the old-time singing about as good as any.

Of course operie has its place and I suppose its nice, but I'm in favor of pumping the melodeon to home.

RABBIT SANDWICHES

It's funny, ain't it, how things will go through your mind when you're just setting and thinking. There's all kinds of good setting places like Morris chairs, and hammocks and buggy seats, and sophies, and all them things. You take a hammock, now. You can kind of set in it and by moving your feet you can swing this way and that way and git a breeze and enjoy yourself considerable, but when you want to think along with your setting, there ain't nothing like a soap-box out back of the barn. That's how I come to think about Clem.

Clem was quite a feller. He was Deacon in the church, assistant treasurer of the Lodge, sergeant on the fire department, truant officer, on the committee for Bigger and Better and More Profitable Business, and lots of other things. Clem had more titles than a porcupine has quills.

How Clem got the idea, the Lord only knows, but somehow he got the notion he could make quite a bit of change by selling rabbit sandwiches. Anyhow he put a stock out in front the house and started selling them like hot cakes to

the autos what come through with out-of-state folks in them.

He went along pretty good for a couple of months cutting bread and spreading on rabbit meat, and then one day the pure-food officer come down from Bangor and dropped in on him. He says to Clem, "How in Sam Hill do you git enough rabbit meat to put in all them sandwiches?"

"Oh, I git it," says Clem.

"Is it all rabbit meat you use?" says the feller.

"Every bit of it's rabbit meat," says Clem, "that is, all but just a mite."

"Then you do use a little other meat?"

"Just a mite now and then," says Clem.

"What other kind of meat do you use?"

"Sometimes I just put in a pinch of horse meat to give it foundation."

"I don't see how you have enough rabbit meat even then," says the feller. "What proportion do you use?"

"Fifty-fifty," says Clem.

"Fifty-fifty, eh? Seems to me that's quite a 'pinch.' How do you measure to be sure it's fifty-fifty?"

"There ain't no trouble to that?" says Clem. "I take one rabbit and one horse."

The Ladies Literary Society isn't meeting this week because of illness. It seems to me it ought to be called the Ill-Literary Society.

When the Lord made women he must have left out some important ingredient and substituted a craving for moving furniture around instead.

The feller who wakes up and finds himself famous ain't been so sound asleep as you may think he has.

THE LORD AND THE POET

We have quite a number of organizations here in Jonesport for the betterment of brains, but the one that stands head and shoulders above them all is the Ladies' Shaksperian and Browning Society. The name is kind of misleading 'cause they don't read just Shakspere and Browning, but all other poets they can lay their hands on.

One of the interesting points about the society is the women take the name of their favorite poet. There's Minnie Sparrow Browning, president; Lizzy Peters Shakspere, vice-president; Jezebel Googins Whittier, treasurer and secretary. The ordinary members are Sarah Titcomb Longfeller, Tillie Thomas Keats, Pansy Lufkin Tennyson, Rachel Hooper Byron and Mary Haynes Whitcomb Riley.

Last week they had one of their meetings and asked the men-folks to come along. The meeting started off with poetry and ended up with ice-cream and cake.

Ma and me went but left kind of early, 'cause we had to hoof it for home.

When we got there, Ma flopped down in the Morris chair and I washed up the milk pails. When I come back in the room she was still setting and pondering in great shape.

"Seth," she says, "you heard that poem tonight about there not being any life after death, didn't you?"

"I ain't exactly deaf, Ma," says I.

"What did you think about it?"

"I thought it must have been a pretty good poem or they probably wouldn't have stuck it in."

"You know what I mean, Seth. We've read a couple of poems of late that have said there ain't no life after this one. Do you think that's so?"

"Shucks, that ain't worrying you much, is it," says I.

"Yes, it is Seth. If you had to answer the question, what would yer say?"

"Answer what question?"

"Do you believe there's life after death?" says Ma.

"Seems to me the Lord done a pretty good job with this world, don't you think so, Ma?"

"Yes."

"You and me couldn't make oceans like he done?"

"No."

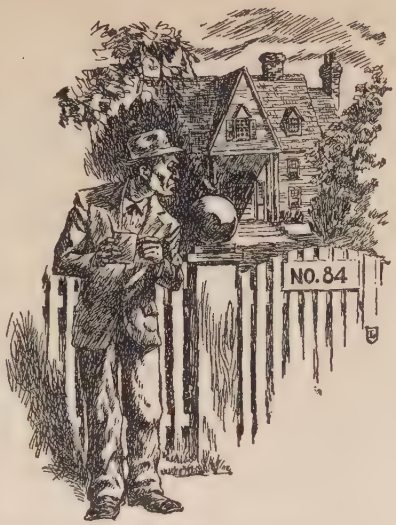
"We couldn't probably do all the figgering what was necessary neither. The seasons and the nights and the rains and things like that. They come pretty regular. He must have spent quite a time in making us too."

"But what about life after death, Seth?"

"Well, I'll tell you, Ma. If you was to knit a sweater for forty years would you throw it away as soon as you had it done?"

"Of course I wouldn't."

"After seeing the things the Lord's done, Ma, I'd be apt to say he had about as much sense as you have, and it wouldn't surprise me none if he knew just about as much about his business as that poet feller."



We're all glad to welcome Zeb Tucker back to Jonesport. Zeb got a job in Bangor as sort of a collector, but he didn't hang on very long. Zeb says they was nice fellers though, and at the end of the first day bought a ticket back to Jonesport for him and carried him down to the train and put him right in it. It seems that Zeb was sent out to see some folks who lived at eighty-four Maple St. When he got up the street to where he thought the number ought to be, he looked up at the house and there was a big sign on the house that said No. 84. Zeb says he weren't going to fool around if there weren't No. 84 so he went back to the office and told them. At fust they thought he was crazy and then they caught on. That's when they went down and bought the ticket and put him on the train.

THE BACK FENCE

Dave Hopkins was a pretty successful young business man over to Calaise. He had a boy, Tom, he thought the world of, but Dave was gitting along so well in business he didn't have much time to spend with Tom. He was with him now and then as a Pa is with his boy, but he put his business fust and sort of let the little feller shift for himself.

The Widder Ross had the next place to the Hopkins and one day she come over and complained to Dave that his young one was climbing the back fence and dropping into her garden. She had quite a bit to say about it, so that night Dave got Tom over in one corner of the room and told him that if he ever clumb the back fence agin he was going to give him a regular old-fashioned horse-whipping.

That sort of ended matters for a while, but a couple of weeks later when David was coming home from the store he happened to look over by the house and there he seen Tom's head just disappearing over the top of the back fence. He could see the curly hair as it sort of slipped

along the edge and then disappeared at the far corner.

That night when Tom come in for supper David got him by the back of the neck and took him to the woodshed where he whipped him for disobeying orders.

Well, that was all there was to that, but before another month Tom come in one night with a bad cough he'd got from playing around in the mud puddles all day and before morning he was pretty well snuffed up. David called in all the doctors he could get his hands on, but the little feller kept getting worse and worse and by the end of the week it had got the best of him and he died.

It just about broke David's heart. He'd took Tom for granted, but when the little feller weren't there at the supper table giving a mite of trouble it made the house seem awful empty and David would have given his whole business and his life too if he could have just had him back for a little while.

A couple of weeks after Tom had died I happened to be over to Calaise setting in the buggy along the early part of the evening, and as I set there I seen David come up the street

after his day at the store. He weren't walking quite so snappy as he used to and his head was bent forward. As he come to the open lot along side of the house I seen him look over at the back fence. It was just an ordinary board fence, but he stopped and wiped his eyes as he seen it. For a moment he stood there and then sort of hesitating he walked over to it, took off his coat and swung himself up on top. Then crawling along the edge on his hands and knees he let himself down on the other side till his head was just a peeping over the top as he'd seen Tom's head the day he come home and found him disobeying.

Pretty soon his head disappeared from view. I couldn't see through the old boards, but somehow I knew that he was kneeling on the other side—and perhaps calling for Tom to come and play a little while.

You see—he wanted to do what his boy had done so that he could be with him.

Folks, there are boys in places to-night who wouldn't be there if their Pa's had only clumb the back fence with them and got to know them. There are boys to-night who are going to be places they shouldn't unless their Pa's *do* climb

the back fence before it's too late. If you've got a boy, or if your neighbor's got a boy who ain't got a Pa, take off your coat and climb the back fence with him before it's too late.

Jonathan Flood has a patent under way for an invention he hopes to make a lot of money on. It's a contrivance you put on the bridle of a horse so you can pull a cord and unhitch from a hitching post without gitting out. It worked fust rate, but the drawback is after you pull the cord what unhitches the horse, you have to git out the wagon in order to untie the apparatus from the post what done the unhitching.

Somehow or other, Ezrie got it in his mind he wanted to go to sea. He got a job for a week with the government tug planting buoys. When he got back though he give it up. Sam Peabody was driving by Ezrie's place the fust day he was back and he says to Ezrie, "How'd you like going to sea?"

Ezrie cocked his head and says, "I'll tell you, Sam, it's about the most useless business I ever ran up agin. We planted black buoys, red buoys, spindle buoys, bell buoys, and all sorts of buoys, but the fog come in just the same."

PRAYING BY INSTALMENTS

I was over to Steuben last week. Silas Matthews had a piece of timber-land he was kind of hankering to have me look over; but I guess when you come right down to it he was trying to kill two birds with one stone, 'cause he hitched up that sorrel colt of his and was sot on my riding behind her. I don't suppose she'd been in harness more than a dozen times and Silas had to keep a pretty taut rein on her, or she'd have left us alongside the gutter somewhere.

We had to go down Foster's Hill before we got to where the timber-land was and we hadn't no more than got over the brow of the hill before she caught sight of a piece of paper blowing and come right up on her haunches. Silas eased up on the reins 'cause he didn't want to pull her over backwards on us, but as soon as she come down on her four feet he commenced to haul pretty hard. She was beginning to calm down a mite when the rein on the high side busted and she lit right out like a bill collector after a feller what's been left some money. I never went so fast before and I hope I never do again.

I thought we was going end over end most any moment, but all Silas done was to hold on to the seat for dear life and pray. He done more praying from the middle of Foster's Hill to the bottom than you'd hear at a prayer-meeting of Parsons.

I stood it about as long as I could 'cause it weren't my colt and buggy, and then I hollered between bounces to Silas and says, "You're too far back in your praying instalments for me. I'm going into action."

I got a hold of the rein that was left and by working out on the whiffletree and then to the thill I got on the colt's back. She give a couple of healthy bucks, but I stuck to her like a Scotchman on the end of a dollar bill.

When I got her quiet and a good grip on her, I turned around and looked back at Silas setting in the buggy. He was white as a sheet and scarter than Bill Tuchee is he'll have to take collection on Sunday.

The whole trouble with Silas was that he'd left his praying to the last minute. He'd had plenty of time to do it, but he'd let it go so long he was too far back in his instalments to get into action when the time came. Rushing

twenty years of praying into three minutes ain't so very satisfactory.

I wouldn't have swapped places with Silas for nothing. When the Lord gits ready to call me home I don't want to make him stand around and wait while I do the praying I should have done years before. When he pays me the compliment of coming to me and asking me to come home, he may be in a hurry and I'd be real ashamed to keep him waiting. I want to be able to say to him:

Lord, take me just as I am.
Just as I am, without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me.
And that thou bid'st me to thee,
Lamb of God, I come! I come!

There's been some pretty interesting circumstances between Jane Hopple and Silas Peters. Silas was keeping company with Jane until she bought some hyacinth perfumery from a mail-order house. She commenced using it in healthy doses and when Silas went down to call he commenced getting hay fever. He said

he wouldn't call till she stopped using it and as she was brought up to be real saving and not throw things away she wouldn't waste it. Last week the bottle got busted so Silas started calling agin and now they're engaged to be married in a couple of years.

Will Tucker has been cured of baldness, but the trouble is that the cure is apt to slide over one ear when he takes his hat off.

There's all sorts of pills and fancy cures, but the best tonic for ailments is friends.

Perhaps I'm careless, but somehow or other I ain't never spent much time in doubting religion. When you spend your time doubting a friend you don't have much time to enjoy him.

I don't recollect ever seeing many doubters who seemed to thrive on it, and the best way to

tell whether there's more nourishment in corn or mush is to feed corn to one chicken and mush to the other.

When the corners of the mouths of the doubters commence to turn up instead of down, I'll commence to think there may be something to it and that'll be plenty of time to do my investigating.

The Widder Ross give Jane her collection of buttons as an engagement present. There are 8,698 buttons in the collection and they represent the Widder Ross's life-long savings. There ain't no reason for the other women to get jealous of the collection, though, for the Widder has had three husbands to do the saving from.

THE DIAMOND CABBAGE

A couple of years ago I was down to Boston for a spell, and one day I was standing out on one of them main streets just watching the people and the autos a-whizz it and a-go it. It was a turrible cold day and I was standing in the lee of one of them big jewelry stores where they had jewels that cost more than the whole coast of Jonesport.

As I was standing there a woman all wrapped up in a fur coat stepped out from a big auto and come over to the winder. There was a diamond she was looking at, so I looked too, but all I could see was the price tag along side of it. It said, $2500.

That kind of left me out the running, so I stepped back to give her more room to do her looking in; but I hadn't no more than got out the way than a little girl squoze in front of me and she was holding the hand of an old lady—an old lady that I sort of reckoned was her grandma. I guess she must have been about seventy and it didn't take much looking to know she was poorer than Job's turkey.

The old woman had a shawl over her head and shoulders, but the rest of her was pretty well exposed to the wind. She had some sort of a light coat on, but it weren't heavy enough to keep her teeth from chattering and her shoulders from quivering as the chill wind swept up the street.

"Look, Grandma," says the little girl, "ain't that a pretty diamond. I'm going to buy that for you."

"Now that's nice of you," says the old lady. "It is pretty, ain't it? Let's see now. I've got to git you something."

"Why don't you buy me the bracelet?" says the little girl pointing to one what had writ on it a thousand dollars.

"Pshaw," says the old lady, "if you're going to buy the big diamond for me, I've got to buy something better than just that bracelet for you. Grown folks can afford to buy bigger things than little girls. I'm going to buy you a diamond as big—as big—as big—as this cabbage!"

With that she pulled out a cabbage from under the red shawl and held it up for both of them to look at. The little girl felt of it and then she looked at her grandma and they both laughed

and their eyes shone with excitement of the game.

"See, I've got it for you already," she said to the little girl. "We'll take it home with us."

So she tucked the make-believe diamond under her arm and they went off down the street with it bulging out from under the shawl. The last I heard was the little girl trying to think of something bigger and better than a diamond the size of a cabbage which she could give her grandma.

I'd forgot all about the woman in the fur coat, but when I turned around I seen she was looking at the diamond agin, and it didn't seem near so big as it had before and it weren't near so nice as the cabbage that the old lady had tucked under her arm. The lady at the winder wrapped her fur coat around her and went back to the auto without buying the diamond.

You know, the Lord has give us all the right to play and in it there's no distinction for nobody. If you can play you can buy more costly jewels than have ever been seen. You can climb the highest mountains, you can swim the widest rivers and do all sorts of things that perhaps you ain't ever thought about.

When life gits bumpy and the going gits kind of hard, it's surprising how a little playing now and then will make the going a whole lot better.

The Capt's aspiring to be town clerk. We're having a meeting on Saturday to vote on him and all other aspirins.

David Gossen has just varnished the fire-engine so I think we all ought to be real careful about having fires. We mustn't call out the engine till the varnish gits dry.

The Thursday Morning Circle will meet on Tuesday and not on Friday as is their usual custom.

Noah would have saved a lot of trouble if he'd only swatted them two mosquitoes when they paraded up the gangplank of the ark.

When a father laughs at his boy, the chances are he ain't laughing at the boy but at himself some twenty years ago.

GOSSIP

The story I've got in mind is a story Lester Googins told me quite a few years ago. Lester got it from Mary Hooper's pa over to Blue Hill who's a cousin of Judge Hooper's. The Judge was one of the Deacons in Parson Tuttles' Church, so the story comes pretty straight. It seems there was a woman—I guess it don't make so much difference about her name—who was quite a hand at gabbing about other folkses' business. Sort of a she-gossip, I guess you might call her.

One day she was walking by the Hutter's place and she looked up at the winder and there was the shadow of Mary Hutter setting with her arms around a man. The woman knew Frank was over to Surrey for the day so she up and drew her own conclusions and didn't waste time airing them. In just about twenty minutes the whole town was buzzing.

That night when Frank dropped into the store on his way home from Surrey somebody told him what was being said and instead of going

home the way he should, he went down to the wharf and started drinking.

The next morning they found him dead at the bottom of the Hill Cliff where he'd stepped over on his way home. It come turrible hard to Mary Hutter and if it hadn't been for her Pa who had dropped over early in the morning to visit her from up-state, she'd have been a great deal worse off.

Yes, that's who it was. It was her father the woman had seen in the window.

It brought right home to the woman what she'd done, but 'twas too late to make it up. She felt turrible about it, though, and went to Parson Tuttle with the whole story. "What can I do, what can I do?" she kept moaning.

"You do as I say," says the Parson kind of snappy. "You go out and git a basket of chicken down and spread some in every chicken yard there is in town."

The woman didn't understand what it was all about, but she got a basket of down and went around dropping a mite in the chicken yards like the Parson had told her to. When she got through she went back to see him.

"Was it hard," he says.

"Of course it weren't," she says.

"Now," says the Parson, "I want you to take the basket and collect it all up agin."

"Why, I can't do that," said the woman.

"Why can't you?" says the Parson.

"It's blowed all over everywhere," she says.

"Don't you know where it blowed to?"

"I haven't the least idea," she says.

"My dear woman," says the Parson, "that's just like the gossip you've been spreading for fifty years. It's easy to drop, but you can't ever collect it up agin no matter how hard you try."

Well, sir, I'd like to have met that old Parson. To my way of thinking, gossip is just about the lowest thing the devil ever concocted.

I've heard folks admit they was thieves. I've heard them admit they was liars or murderers, but I've never heard a person admit they was a gossip.

Seems to me when you say something about a feller what ain't present you ought to make pretty sure it's complimentary. If it ain't complimentary, the chances are twelve out of a dozen,

it's gossip and ought not to be blowing around loose.

They used to say that a pointed nose meant a body was inquisitive, but a flat nose meant he'd *been* inquisitive.

Spending Sunday at the church may have some disadvantages, but one thing you can say for it is that it don't turn turtle.

The last storm blew down two more bricks from the chimney of the Baptist Church. This leaves four more to fall and on windy days I think we'd better all stick to the south side of the street.

It's nice to set back on your haunches and have the parson do your praying for you, but I've al-

ways cal'lated the Lord weren't so partial to praying by proxy as he might be. Seems to me he'd like to hear from you personal now and then. These circular letter prayers ain't all they're cracked up to be.

When a feller's eyes ain't bigger than his appetite it means he's gitting old.

It takes more than repeating the books of the Bible to get you into Heaven.

They used to say: An optimist the doughnut sees— A pessimist the hole.

THE ENGINEER

I ain't got much of a mind for remembering dates. They seem to slip right through it like water through a sieve, but it seems to me like it must be twenty-two or -three years ago I drove over to Bangor with Prin Curtis and took the train home. Remember them old bumpy coaches that rode along like a jigger wagon? You certainly got your bumping's worth.

I was setting there in the seat watching the things go by the window and there was a city fellow across the aisle fidgeting around and kind of upsot at the pace we was plugging along. He stood it about as long as he could and then he commenced walking up and down the aisle. I says to him, "You might's well set down, mister, and take it easy. You won't git there before the train does."

"I'd git out and walk," he says, "but the folks ain't expecting me so soon."

His eyes kind of twinkled and I saw he had a pretty good sense of humor.

When we got to going up McGowan's Hill we kept slowing down till we was hardly moving,

and when the conductor come through the aisle the city feller said to him, "Have you got a cow-catcher on this engine?"

"Of course we have," says the conductor.

"I wonder if you'd take it off," says the fellow, "and put it out behind. Some cow is apt to walk up the track and right into the last car here, and there ain't nothing to protect us."

I come pretty near choking, it struck me so funny, but then I commenced to git serious. We was going down the other side of McGowan's Hill and going faster and faster and faster. The coaches commenced to hop around and rattle and the folks got scart and held on to the seats for dear life.

There was a little girl sitting in the seat ahead of me and I should say she was along about ten or eleven. She was all alone and I was kind of sorry for her, so I moved up a seat and says to her, "We're going kind of fast, ain't we?"

"Yes, we are," she says.

"Ain't you a mite afraid?" says I.

"Why, of course I'm not," she says, looking up at me real surprised. "My father's the engineer and he knows I'm aboard."

Well, sir, I've often thought of that little hap-

pening. I wonder if lots of us wouldn't be more contented if we stopped to think that the Great Father was the engineer and knew we was along.

You know, I was setting in church last Sunday and something come up right along this order. On the right of me was Ben Whitcomb praying for hot weather so he'd sell more ice-cream and on the left of me was Deacon Withersby praying for rain to make his crops grow. Now I thought to myself as I heard them, the Lord's going to have quite a job cut out for him tomorrow when all the folks git through turning in their orders.

I don't suppose if I'd got into the cab of the engine we was talking about a few minutes ago and commenced hauling on this lever and pushing on that, that I would have helped out very much, seeing I don't know nothing about the workings of engines.

It seems to me it would be sort of nice if we was to give the Lord a vacation now and then and forgit to ask him to do this and that for us, and for a change tell him what we're going to do for him. I don't know how an engineer is, but I do know in buggy riding that back seat driving gits on your nerves and I shouldn't won-

der if the Lord now and then comes in for more than his share.

I don't put a pile of store by folks telling me how religious they be. Let me have a horse deal with a feller and a week later I'll tell you about how much religion he's got.

I suppose it's nice to have your earnings in the bank so you can open up a book and look at it, but for me, I prefer to have my earnings in pairs of shoes coming to spend the evening with me.

THE ELEPHANT

You know I kind of enjoy setting and harking to stories. There's one I heard quite a spell ago that sort of comes to mind now and again. It's a story about some blind young ones.

It seems that there was a blind institution on a road somewheres, and one day a circus parade come past. The young ones was out a-setting on a bank a harking to the music when all of a sudden the parade stopped and come to a halt. It seems a freight train was switching cars back and forth and held it up.

There was four boys setting a mite apart from the others down in the ditch as near the road as they could git, and when the parade stopped the elephant was right opposite them. Seeing the blind boys there so excited, kind of touched the heart of the feller what was leading the elephant and he started talking to them.

Come to find out none of them had ever seen an elephant, so he took each one in turn and let him feel of the critter. The first one caught a hold of the elephant's trunk, the second one felt the elephant's leg, the next one got a hold of a

tusk, and the last one felt the side of the elephant. Then the train pulled out and the parade went ahead, but left four turrible happy boys setting on the bank.

They got to talking about the elephant as boys will git to talking, and the one who felt the elephant's trunk says, "An elephant's just like a snake, ain't he?"

"Like a snake!" says the one who felt the elephant's leg. "An elephant's like a tree."

"An elephant ain't like a tree," says the one who felt the elephant's tusk. "An elephant's like a stick."

"I don't know what the three of you are talking about," says the one who felt the side of the elephant. "An elephant's like the side of a house."

Well, sir, they set there the rest of the day squabbling about what an elephant looked like and the more they talked the more upsot they got.

I suppose some folks would say they was all wrong, but the more I've thought it over, the more I've come to think they was all right. The trunk of an elephant is like a snake, his leg is like a tree, his tusk is like a stick, and the side

of him is a good deal like the side of a house.

The whole trouble with the little fellers was that they was blind. They just caught a hold of the part what was nearest to them and they couldn't see beyond it, and yet they got more enjoyment out of that part of him than they would have by not touching the elephant at all. The mistake they made was in thinking the others was all wrong.

As I've sort of set and thought over the story it seems to me that lots of folks git a hold of religion a good deal in the same order. They grab the part that's nearest to them and hold on for dear life. This ain't such a bad idee neither, 'cause religion's a pretty big animal you know, and it may be sort of hard for us to grasp it all at once; but the trouble comes in thinking there ain't no more to it than just the part you're holding onto.

There's lots of limbs to religion and they're shaped a mite different here and there, but they're all hitched on to the same thing.

The Lord ain't never appointed me a committee of one to do his explaining for him, but last night after the chores was done, I set down on the bank by the pine-tree and kind of thought this

little story over. When I get to thinking I sort of chew on a straw. I don't know why it is but chewing on a straw and looking up at the stars seems to make you think a mite straighter sometimes; and the thought come to me as I looked up above, and I says to myself, "It wouldn't surprise me none if there was about as many Unitarian angels aplucking on harps as Presbyterian."

There ain't no theology nor science what could make a child happier than just believing in Santa Claus.

There ain't no nuisance so big as a woman bent on cleaning.

If you could bottle good wholesome laughs, they'd take the place of a good many medicines.

Too many folks have got rheumatiz of their laughing muscles.

Sleep rests your body and prayer rests your mind.

Some folks would wear carpet-slippers for earrings if they thought 'twas the style.

You know, folks, I've often thought, about half the fun of living is setting down with your

memories. When you sing the old songs in the twilight, other years and places seem to come back to you.

When a man's a real neighbor there ain't a great deal more that religion can do for him.

I've often set on the front piazza and watched the automobiles a whizzing by. They don't go nowheres and pretty soon they come back agin.

The difference between a lie and a yarn is that you don't care whether the folks believe the yarn or not.

FROGS' LEGS

It's surprising what a nice feeling a good chuckle will give you, ain't it? A good chuckle does to a disposition about the same as liniment does to a lame back; but this ain't gitting on with my story.

I was setting on the counter one morning down to Cummings and Norton's store just passing the time of day and in come Sam Googins all puffy and wheezy. He was all upsot about something and he come over to Ed and says: "Could you use a car-load of frogs' legs?"

"I couldn't use a car-load of frogs' legs in a month of New Years," Ed says.

"Could you use half a car-load of frogs' legs?"

"Of course I couldn't," says Ed, wondering what Sam was trying to git at.

"Well," says Sam, "couldn't you use just a couple of dozen pairs of frogs' legs?"

"That's coming down to earth," says Ed. "I guess if you was to let me have a couple of dozen legs I could sell them."

"I'll bring them to you in the morning, then,"

says Sam going out the door like the "every-member canvass" was after him.

Well sir, being sort of an inquisitive feller I made it a point the next morning to git down to the store in time to be there when Sam was due with the frogs' legs. Ed and me set around talking about frogs' legs we'd knowed of, and what they was like and the market value of them, and what-not, when Sam come in holding a little paper bag out in front of him real gingerly-like.

Without saying nothing he put the bag down on the counter and then come to roost on top the nail keg.

"Now don't that beat all," he says.

"Don't what beat all?" says Ed.

"Well sir," he says, "you know that little mite of a pond down back the house? The one the ducks use?"

Ed cal'lated he knew it and Sam says,

"Every night about ten o'clock while I'm trying to go to sleep, the frogs in that pond commence to croak. They've kept me awake night after night and I would have swore there was a car-load of them, but I went down and drained the pond yesterday and I've brought you all the frogs' legs there was there."

"How many'd you git," says Ed.

"That's the funniest part," says Sam, "there was only three pairs."

When I got home I chuckled to myself fit to be sent to a lunatic asylum, and then the frogs' legs reminded me of something. Can you guess what it was? Well, I'll tell you. It was troubles.

Now you let a feller have a set of troubles and if he sets and commences to think about them it's surprising how many they'll git to be.

The feller what does a lot of boasting about his ancestors kind of admits there ain't much about himself worth talking about.

Some men have got more excuses than a porcupine has quills.

If you don't think the devil is hard to resist try resisting him sometime.

Most the things in life are just ordinary and lots of times they're the best.

Frank Dennis was the worst spendthrift I ever seen. Three times he writ a check for five dollars and then lit his pipe with the checks.

There's lots of good religion in an open fire. Perhaps it ain't the halleluiah kind, but it's reliable.

Well, I was setting on the counter talking with Silas when one them young summer boarders come in. The feller says, "I bought some eggs here this morning and I've come back to tell yer—"

"Henry," yells Silas, "you've give this feller some rotten eggs. Do up another dozen."

"But you don't understand," says the feller. "I bought two dozen eggs and when I got home

I found there was three dozen in the sack instead of two."

"Henry," yells Silas, "you've give this feller two dozen rotten eggs. What's the matter with you? Wrap up two—"

"But," says the feller, "you don't understand, I only paid for two dozen and I got three dozen. I want to return one dozen. I'm too honest—"

"Henry," yells Silas, "what in Sam Hill's the matter with you? You've give this feller three dozen rotten eggs. If you do that agin I'll discharge you. Put in four extry ones."

"But you don't understand—"

"Listen here, young feller, you'd better take them eggs and go along," says Silas. "I understand better than you think I do. If I take them, then I've got to say, well now, he's an honest feller, and then you're going to come in next Monday and buy nine dollars worth of groceries and tell me you'll pay me Saturday night. No sir, I ain't such a fool as I might be. Henry, make that three dozen and a half and put in a couple of sticks of that striped candy for the gentleman."

There ain't nothing like an open fire to thaw out hard feelings.

If you'll stop going forward now and then long enough to oil up with your experiences of the past you'll find you'll more than make up for lost time.

Chickly Peppers has a wooden leg you know. Well sir, the insurance agent what come down here last summer not only sold Chickly life insurance, but he sold him fire insurance for his wooden leg.

Half the fun of doing things is the thinking-them-over part.

Of course you're gitting older. Lands sakes, you wouldn't want to be left behind while all the other folks got older. It was age what grew you up, weren't it?

It's a whole lot easier to git a fish-hook caught than it is to get it uncaught.

The sun comes up again, so does the moon, leaves come out the next spring after resting and I ain't got no cause to think the Lord has drawed the line on me.

The surest way to git your money's worth is to give it to help somebody else.

Did you ever notice that a horse that's pulling like Sam Hill and trying to get ahead is real peaceful, but them what are standing still will sometimes kick terrible.

Moving furniture is to a woman what a vacation is to a man.

OLD DR. MATTHEWS

You see 'twas this way.

Old Dr. Matthews was born and raised in East Wentworth and stayed there all his life. He was a fust-rate doctor and had plenty of chances to go to big city hospitals, but he felt as though the little town sort of needed him and so he stayed there.

From early morning till late at night he'd drive around the countryside tending them that needed him. He got lots of practice as the doctors call it, but that's about all he did git. He never got no money 'cause folks over there was poor as Job's turkey, but he stayed there tending them and helping them just the same. When he did git a dollar or so the chances were that the next one he called on needed money worse than pills, so he'd put the dollar in a pill-box and leave it with them.

His office was a little room in the garret of the Thompson house and here during the day he'd look after them who came in to see him. At night he'd make up the cot and sleep there, for 'twas the only home he had. Perhaps you've drove by

DR. MATTHEWS
OFFICE ABOVE

the old Thompson place and seen the sign out front what said, "Dr. Matthews, Office Above."

He didn't have the victuals he should have had neither, and the room was cold from the fust part of winter to the last. It didn't seem to bother him a whole lot for a good many years, but when age come it was a mite harder, and before folks knew what it was all about, the doctor had up and died. Some said it was exposure—others said it was lack of the right kind of food. I don't suppose it makes so much difference what the cause was, the fact is that he died before his time.

He didn't have no relatives and didn't have no money in the bank so he was buried in the paupers' field and there weren't no stone to mark the grave neither.

A couple of months after he'd passed on there was some young fellers from the town what had been to a dance up at the Bridge, and from what I hear, they'd been carousing quite a bit. Anyhow, they was pretty boisterous and on the way home as they was coming by the cemetery one of them pointed over to it and says, "There's the grave of old Dr. Matthews. Seems too bad he ain't even got a tombstone, don't it?"

They didn't think much more about it, but

coming into town they had to go by the Thompson place and out there on the lawn was the Doctor's sign that hadn't been took down yet. One of them saw it and suggested as a lark that they git it and take it back to the cemetery and put it on the Doctor's grave.

In a jiffy they'd stopped the car and was pulling up the sign. They wouldn't have done it if they hadn't been feeling as they was, but they did it and turning the auto around they drove back to the cemetery.

Here they got out and taking the sign with them went into the paupers' field till they come to the grave of the country doctor. The one who was carrying the sign went over to the grave and stuck it into the loose earth above it. Then he stepped back with a smile on his face, but the smile disappeared as he stood there and read the words of the sign. "Doctor Matthews, Office Above."

Parson Titcomb called out from the pulpet that we was to all sing "When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder I'll Be There." While we was looking it up he started reading the words and he got so

excited that he pointed Up when he read "When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder" and he pointed Down when he read "I'll Be There."

Did you ever hear about the three little fellers sleeping in a bed? One of them says, "If two of us should get up there'd be more room for me."

When I was a little feller living over to the falls my pa and ma went to a talk in the church by a Missionary who had a Missionary school in Egg-Wiped.

Where was that school?

In Egg-wiped.

How do yer spell it?

E-G-Y-P-T.

Just because we ain't all Baptists don't mean we can't contribute to building a new roof over the Baptist church. I think the Lord will give us

about as much credit for keeping rain off Baptist heads as any other heads.

I heard of an old gentleman who said that when he let the payments to the church lapse three months he began to question the sincerity of the folks in the front pews and if he let it git six months behind he got to finding fault with the preaching and if he let it get a year behind he began to think the parson was a hypocrite and they ought to have a new one.

A good thought's worth stuttering over.

Some folks seem to git the idea they're worth a lot of money just because they have it.

MUMBLEDY-PEGS

If I ain't holding you up now and you ain't got nothing to do I'd like to tell you about the time the Widder Ross drove up by Captain Alley's.

The Alley's live so far out of town there ain't nobody for the little Alley young one to play with, so he has to do most of his playing alone. It seems too bad he don't have a dog out there to sort of keep him company and I've been looking around to sort of pick one up to take out to him. If you know of a good second-hand dog you might send him along. It seems to me that a dog will do more to make a President of the United States out of a boy than most anything I know of, but of course it's just my own opinion.

There I go gitting off the story. I'm talking about dogs and I started talking about the Alley young one.

Well, one day the Widder Ross was driving that dapply mare of her'n in the buggy and when she went up by the Alley place there was Tommy out in the driveway playing mumbledy-pegs. You know what that is, don't you?

Well, he was a-spearing the knife and laugh-

ing and talking to himself and having a grand time. He didn't hear the Widder drive up at all so he kept right on. She hauled the mare over into the gutter and sat there watching the little feller and then she says to him, "Little boy, folks don't talk to themselves unless they've got money in the bank or are crazy. Have you got any money in the bank?"

It come as such a surprise to him he backed off sort of scart and says, "No, mum."

"You ain't crazy, be you?" she says.

"I don't think so, mum," he says, edging over a mite to get a better look at her.

"Then who do you think you're playing and talking with?"

He didn't say nothing for a couple of seconds like he was fussed and then he looked up and says, "I was playing with Jesus."

Well sir, she come up with a start like a bumblebee had set on her neck and says, "Ain't you ashamed of yourself. The Lord don't play jackknife. He ain't got time for them sort of things," and then she whipped up the mare and went off like she was scart she was going to get polluted or something.

I didn't get wind of what happened till the

next day, but when I did hear about it I hitched up and drove up by the Alley's place like I was going somewhere but nowhere in particular. I stopped in at the farm to sort of pass the time of day and I got into a game of that mumbledy-peg with Tommy. While we was setting there on the grass a-spearing the jack-knife he says to me, "Mr. Parker, do you think Jesus would play mumbledy-peg with me?"

"Well," says I, "it wouldn't surprise me none. Seems to me I recollect something in the Bible about his asking little fellers to come to him. I don't know as they played mumbledy-peg in them days, but they must have had some sort of games."

He grinned and beamed all over like a budding sunflower and he says to me, "I guess my Jesus and the Widder Ross's Jesus ain't the same, cause my Jesus plays mumbledy-peg with me."

You know, folks, religion is sort of operated by older folks as it ought to be, but we want to make sure we don't turn religion into just an old folkses' paradise. When a feller's sixty he don't wear the same set of trousers he done when he was ten.

I've sort of noticed at Church suppers that coffee cools about as quick in a Unitarian saucer as in a Baptist one.

If you leave a new umbrella in the vestibule and it's still there when you come out, you can bet your boots the Parson has preached a pretty stirring sermon.

If you're feeling happy frogs sound happy too, but if you're feeling grumpy they're about the most mournful noise what was ever concocted.

There ain't no question, but it pays to advertise.

Now you take ducks. Ducks probably know pretty near as much about laying eggs as hens. They've done it just as long and have done a pretty good job as far as I can see, but there's a difference.

Take a duck now. A duck will lay an egg and then git up and not say a thing about it, but when a hen lays an egg the whole barnyard knows about it. That's why there's more call for hen's eggs than duck's eggs. It pays to advertise, I tell you.

When you've done things you're ashamed of the dark don't appeal to you, but when you've done the best you can it seems real peaceful. I always cal'lated it was because when it's light you can see the things around you, but when it's dark and you can't, you start taking a peek at yourself.

NON-PATENTED

Silas Tucker who used to live over to Columbia Falls, weren't much of a feller for thinking of others. He ran the little newspaper and he was so busy rushing here and there, he hardly had time to give folks change when they paid him their bills.

Silas didn't have much use for Christmas neither. He thought of it as a day when you had to hold up your work and if he'd had his way he wouldn't even have knowed what day it come on, but folks kept talking about it so he couldn't help knowing it was Thursday.

Thursday morning he got up earlier than the rest of the family and kept grunting to himself about it's being Christmas, but on the way down the street he seen Tom Harriman; and seeing Tom was a heavy advertiser in the paper, Silas says, "Merry Christmas," and he about fell over when Tom doubled up so hard with laughing he couldn't stand straight.

Silas went on kind of tickled at himself for being so smart and when he seen Sam Fletcher he yelled out, "Merry Christmas," and Sam laughed

and slapped him on the back and thought it was a great joke.

By the time Silas had got to the office he'd yelled "Merry Christmas" to a dozen folks and they had all thought him so smart he was feeling real good; and when he went in the office he yelled out to all what was there, "Merry Christmas to you." They laughed and called out to him and had a great time, and when Silas got alone in his office he set down real tickled with himself. He could hear the folks outside calling "Merry Christmas" to each other and laughing and it gave him quite a kick.

He enjoyed it so much that about ten o'clock in the morning he went out in the main office and says to them, "If you can get your day's work done by three o'clock you can all go home, seeing it's Christmas." They laughed and cheered him

and long before three o'clock come they had more than a day's work done so he let them go and they went off singing his praises and what a wonderful man he was.

Well, seeing no more to be done, Silas went out and bought a dress for his wife, Jane, and took it home and give it to her. She was so surprised she didn't know whether he'd gone crazy or feeble-minded and then he says to her, "I'm surprised you didn't get a Christmas-tree for to-day."

"Didn't get a Christmas tree for to-day?" she says. "What you talking about?"

"Ain't to-day Christmas?" he says.

"Land of Betsy," says Jane, "Christmas ain't until next Thursday."

Well sir, Silas put back his head and laughed so hard he could hardly set in the chair. "And to think," says he, "I got more work done to-day than I ever did and got more fun out of it and it weren't Christmas after all."

If you go up to Columbia Falls some time and ask about Silas Tucker, they'll tell you he's the salt of the earth, but they'll also tell you that he's a mite queer. He's got a funny sense of humor is the way they put it. When business is poor or

Silas gets to feeling blue, he'll pull off what he calls an independent Christmas. He yells "Merry Christmas" to everybody he sees, shuts down early, buys folks presents, and chuckles about it from morning to night.

And what's more, the last time I heard he hadn't even got the idea patented.

A crop of kindness is about the only crop I know about you can sow the whole year round and reap a good harvest.

Old Deacon Googins used to say, "Make yourselves to home. I'm to home and I wish you was."

Harry Jenkins was a real prosperous farmer and Pete Simpson weren't. One day they was walking through the potato field together when Harry pointed to a big pile of potatoes. "Did you ever notice," he says, sticking his thumbs under

his arm, "that you always find the big potatoes at the top of the pile?"

"That may be," said Pete, "but if there weren't no little potatoes there wouldn't be no pile."

When a girl gits grown up she's apt to give up reading fairy-stories and start telling her own. The only difference is she calls them ailments.

Lots of folks seem to like to dress religion up on Sundays and then hang it up in the closet for the rest of the week. It's dangerous. The fust thing you know you'll find it all full of moth holes.

GOING HOME

Jim Fletcher was a handsome strapping feller and one of the quickest fellers on his feet I ever see. They tell the story about Jim being at one of the lumber camps up in the woods and running after a moose and jumping on his back, but I don't know but that's a mite exaggerated. A moose can run pretty fast you know, but anyhow, Jim was extry ordinary when it come to athletics.

The reason that I'm telling you what he was like is because you'd expect when war was declared that Jim would be one of the fust to enlist and that's just what happened. He went off to camp and done pretty well and they sent him to France and he was all over the place from what I can gither.

When the Armistice was signed, Jim come home again, but he didn't come just the same as he'd left. He brought a little French wife with him for one thing and the other was that he weren't the same old Jim. Some of that gas had got into his lungs and he used to get to coughing so it would just about tear him apart.

Well, to git on with the story, Jim and Marie,

that was her name, settled down here in Jonesport and got a little farm and started in to do fust rate. We was all pretty tickled 'cause Marie and Jim was a lot in love; but along about the end of the fust year Jim commenced to fail. We had some doctors come out from the city and they looked him over and done all they could, but he kept right on failing and in another year he passed along.

It was a blow to all of us, but it was worse for Marie. It seemed for a while like she weren't going to get over it; but then she pulled herself together 'cause there was a little baby what had come along. Before long though, she commenced to fade again. It was all strange to her up here in Jonesport and although we done the best we could to make her feel to home, our ways weren't her ways and she couldn't quite get on to them.

She stuck it out for a while, but her money was going and we saw there was only one chance for her and that was to get her home; so we all chipped in a mite and got a ticket for her and put her on the train for New York. I went down to New York with her to see she got on the boat all right and off she went.

It weren't for a couple of years later I heard

what happened and when I did I was turrible upsot I hadn't took better care of her, but this was the way it went.

She only had about ten dollars in her pocket beside the ticket and after she was out a couple of days she learned that the boat didn't go direct to France, but was due in Germany. There she was with ten dollars in her pocket and a little baby in her arms, and she must land way off in a strange country. For days she'd stand by the rail trembling like a leaf and wondering what she was going to do.

When they was a mite more than half way across to the other side Marie was standing by the rail one day looking out to sea and scart most to death when another woman came up and started talking to her. It weren't long before Marie had told her about herself and what the matter was, and the other woman suggested that she send a wireless to her father to meet her. Marie hadn't thought of that before, so she went down with the other woman to the wireless room and sent a message.

All the next day she waited and no answer come and the next morning and the afternoon. In the evening as she was standing by the rail the

wireless officer come out on deck and he had a little yellow paper what he come up and give to her.

For a couple of minutes she didn't dare to look at it and then she unfolded it and read. The other woman was standing back agin the rail and as she watched Marie she saw a smile come to her face that was like the sun coming up in the morning. "What does it say?" she says to Marie.

Marie turned to her with tears of happiness rolling down her face. "It says my father is going to be there. See, my father is going to be there."

You know, folks, when the good Lord sees fit to call me home I ain't going to spend much time worrying whether the streets are paved with gold and what brand of harps the angels are plucking on. I'll be satisfied and content if I know the Great Father is going to be there.

We git together Sunday evenings up here in Jonesport and just have a real nice githering. We

have a good time and the Lord joins in with us—well, we wouldn't miss doing it for nothing. I've wrote a little tune inviting you to come up and join us and we'll be real tickled to see you, and I think the Lord will be too. The words go something like this.

We are gathering with the Lord to-day,
We are gathering with the Lord to-day,
We have all come together
In the good old-fashioned way.
We are gathering with the Lord to-day.

Won't you come, won't you come,
Won't you come and follow in the way.
You will find some happy people,
Just some ordinary folks.
We are gathering with the Lord to-day.

There's an old saying that "what's meat for one is another man's poison."

Now I ain't saying that the different breeds of religion is the same as the meat, but they might be. Anyhow, I've writ a little tune along this idee and the words go something like this:

You go to your church and I'll go to mine,
But let's walk along together;
Our father has built them side by side,
So let's walk along together.
The road is rough and the way is long,
But we'll help each other over.
You go to your church and I'll go to mine,
But let's walk along together.

You go to your church and I'll go to mine,
But let's walk along together,
Our Heavenly Father loves us all,
So let's walk along together.
The Lord will be at my church to-day,
But He'll be at your church also.
You go to your church and I'll go to mine,
But let's walk along together.

I've heard say that a mosquito can fly ten miles. It ain't his flying that troubles me, it's what he does when he sits down.

THE CIRCUS

One day a few years ago a circus stopped over to Steuben and gave a performance. The flags was out and there was popcorn and pink lemonade and all the fixings what goes with circuses; but it weren't such a happy time for a little red-headed freckled-faced feller that lived there. All there was in his family besides himself was a mother, and seeing she weren't well she had about all she could do to git enough money by doing folkses' washing to feed the little feller without thinking of circuses. You can imagine what it would be like though to be a kid agin and have a circus come and leave town without you seeing it, can't you?

Well sir, he made up his mind there weren't never going to be a circus come to town agin that he didn't see, so he set right to work saving up pennies and by the time the circus come around next year he had twenty-four pennies all saved up to see it with. The morning it come he was down at the lot by the time it got there and all that day he watered horses and hammered on stakes and done what he could to help out. They

give him two tickets for the night's performance and you never saw such a happy feller in all your born days. He beamed all over and hopped up and down and then he lit out for home like a wild colt after a bushel of grain.

Well, when he got up to the house he grabbed his mother who was washing over one the washtubs and rushed her upstairs to git on her best dress and tucker 'cause he had two tickets and was going to take her to the circus. You would have thought he was the whole shooting-match in that house he was so proud he was going to take his Ma to the circus; but he was so

excited, instead of waiting for her he told her to get dressed and he'd be right back. He ran back to the grounds thinking he could have a couple of extry minutes at the circus 'cause it only comes to town once a year you know.

He went around to the side of the main tent where the band was playing and he knew that inside that canvas was all the dreams a boy could think of. It just seemed he couldn't wait to see what it was like so he lifted up a corner of the tent flap and peeked in under.

There they was. Camels with humps on the top of them, and elephants with long trunks, and clowns what hopped up and down and for a moment it took his breath away; and then there was a puff of smoke, a shot, and the little fellow crumpled up on the ground. One of the guards had been drinking some liquor and had seen him and thinking he was trying to sneak in under the canvas, had shot him.

When they went around to pick up the little feller they found the two circus tickets in one hand and the twenty-four pennies tied up in a handkerchief in the other. There weren't no circus in town that night.

That's the little story I had in mind and now

I'll tell you why I wanted you to know about it. I've heard of late some of this rumbling about prohibition taking away personal liberty and the Constitution really didn't allow it and all them sort of things. Now I ain't much up on Constitutional Law and there's probably lots I don't know about this personal liberty business, but if we can stop something like this from happening now and then I think it would be a pretty good idee to do it. It seems to me that we have just about enough craziness around abouts without selling it in quart bottles.

When you inherit money there ain't much credit due you until you do something about it. Religion's about the same. Just because you've inherited a good religion ain't nothing to get cocky about. The burden of proof's on you.

Religion's free if you go out and git it, but if you're going to set back and have it brought to you, you've got to pay for it. Take the water up

to the lake. If you want to go and fetch it, it's as free as the air you breath, but if you're going to have it piped to you you've got to pay for the pumping. That's why they pass the collection-plate.

It seems to me that the feller that don't stop now and then to think of yesterday is kind of admitting he didn't do nothing worth remembering.

Jim Googins drove into Deacon Tuttle's yard one day madder than a hornet. He says to the Deacon, "I thought you said those two horses worked fust rate together."

"They do," says the Deacon.

"They don't for me," says Jim. "One of them loafs while the other works."

"That's the way they done for me," says the Deacon. "I told you they got on fust-rate together. One does all the work and the other lets her."

THE ALPHABETICAL PRAYER

A couple of summers ago there come along a nice cool day and seeing I had some business down on the road to the harbor, I hitched the mare to the buggy and we started out. I say "we," meaning the mare and myself.

It's lots of fun when you're sort of jogging along to slip the reins over the dashboard and just set back and look around. This was the way we was going when we come to the old Pease Medder. That's about the prettiest piece of haying land there is in the whole section and that afternoon there was hay-cocks all over the place. The smell of the new-mowed hay was in the air and it was so pleasing to my nostrils I pulled the mare over into the field so I could set there and enjoy the smell.

Well sir, we hadn't no more than come to a halt when I heard a funny noise coming from nowheres at all. It sounded like some kind of an animal was in trouble, so I drove through the field till I finally spotted a haycock that the noise seemed to come from.

I set real quiet in the buggy for a couple of mo-

ments to get my bearings and reckon out what the noise might be before I started investigating, and what do you suppose I heard? Well now, I'll tell you.

It was the voice of a little girl saying, "A—B—C—D—E—F—G—" and so on.

Well sir, you could have knocked me over with a feather at hearing something like that coming from a haycock out in the field, but I got out the buggy and going around to the other side of the hay I seen a little girl along about seven or eight years old setting on the ground with the tears rolling down her face. She had her hands crossed and she was looking up to heaven as she recited the alphabet.

"My sakes," says I, "how be you? Guess I'll set down beside you for a while. Is something ailing you?"

"Yes there is," she says snuggling up beside me. "I'm lost."

"Pshaw, you ain't lost now," says I. "We'll kind of talk things over a mite and then I'll take you home."

"I knew you would," she says looking up at me with a contented smile. "I was waiting for you to come along."

"Waiting for me to come along?" says I. "What made you think I was a-coming?"

"I was praying you would."

"When I heard you fust you was saying, "A—B—C—D—and all the letters of the alphabet. What was you doing that for?"

She looked up at me again and hesitating for a couple of minutes she says, "I'm just a little girl you know. I was praying all the letters in the alphabet and I was letting God put them together. He knows how better than I do."

We set there talking for a spell and then I bundled her in the wagon and we drove down to the shore where her folks was staying for the summer. They was just starting out to hunt for her and was turrible glad to see her again.

On the way home I slipped the reins over the dashboard agin and as I set back and rested, a little thought come to me. What a wonderful feeling it would give the Lord if instead of asking him to do this and do that we should just tell him that we were placing our trust in him and that we wanted him to do whatever he thought was best for us."

It seems to me you ought to know the Lord so well that when he wants you he'll call you by your first name.

It's nice to turn to the Lord when you've got a cinder in your eye, but the feller that's the best off is the feller what asks the Lord to keep the cinder out.

I always cal'lated the Lord meant you to be young. When you commence to git growed up he sends you children and when you git growed up with them he sends you grandchildren and when you grow up with them he sends you great-grandchildren.

Religion ought to be comfortable. Lot's of folks just put it on now and then like a spare suit and they don't seem to be at home in it.

Frank was painting the barn with a brush what only had about half the bristles in it when George Saunders come driving by and stopped to watch him. He says to Frank, "Why don't you get a brush with all the bristles in it. You could do twice as much painting."

Frank says, "I'll tell you, George, I ain't got twice as much painting to do."

PUNISHING THE FISH

I suppose that fishing has done more to broaden men's shoulders than most anything else. You take a man who goes fishing now. When he tells about it he'll stretch his arms out as far as he can and by the time he's told all the folks he knows about the fish that got away from him, he's got as much good out of stretching his arms as he would out of a set of them "calisthentic" exercises.

This Sunday morning, Henry Hinkley's youngest, Red Hink, as the boys call him, left home to go to Sunday-school. Leaving home though, weren't no sign he was going to git there. He's a little red-headed freckled-faced young one full of the old Harry. He don't mean to git into mischief, but he's just as sure to git in as a fly is to git in a pan of milk.

Well, as I was saying, he started out for Sunday-school, but when he come to the lower medder brook where it flows under the bridge by the alders he commenced to weaken a mite. The brook was a-bubbling and sparkling and it seemed like the day was just made for dropping

a line up agin the bank and gitting a hold of one of them trout.

History ain't never said just how it happened, but the fust thing Hink knew he was down in the alders cutting a pole, and then he happened to find a fish-line in his pocket what happened to have a hook on the end of it, and then he happened to find a can of worms that he must have forgot and left there the day before. With all them happenings you can't blame a feller for dropping a line in a brook just to make sure all the trout ain't swum away.

They bit. Bit as they never had before and bit bigger too. He got a hold of some whoppers and it made him feel so good that he forgot it was Sunday and come walking up the road big as life.

He hadn't gone very far, though, before he bumped into Frank Saunders. Frank's quite a sport you know and he ain't much of a church attender; so Red held the fish up to him and says, "How's that for a catch, Mr. Saunders?"

Frank looked at them and then he patted Red on the shoulder and says, "That's the stuff, son. All the fishermen ain't dying out of this town yet."

That made Red feel pretty big, so he stuck his

nose up where his forehead ought to be and went down the road with his fish-pole over his shoulder whistling "The Campbells Is Coming" as if he was a whole band instead of just a little barefoot boy. He might have done a mite better, though, if he'd kept his eyes peeled, for before he knew it he'd run right straight into the Parson.

For a minute he didn't know what to say, and then he held up the fish to the Parson and says, "Look, Parson, see what the fish got for biting worms on Sunday!"

The Parson patted little Hink on the head and went on his way rejoicing.

A church is sort of a storehouse for religion. It's a lot easier to go and get a good supply on hand than it is to run out of it and have to come back for more. The getting back is the hard part.

It's nice to ask the Lord to give us health, and wealth, and what we want and all that, but I kind of think he enjoys our thanking him after he does it.

THE BLIND MOTHER

Mary was one the nicest women that ever lived in Jonesport. She had her peculiarities like the rest of us though, and it was one of these peculiarities I had in mind telling you about. Good as she was, Mary didn't have no use for religion or nothing like it. She didn't believe in God or heaven, and the reason she gave was that she wouldn't believe nothing until it was showed to her. When she saw God she'd believe in him and when she saw Heaven she'd believe in that, and not before.

Well, to git on with the story, Mary kept steady company with Jim Fletcher, and when their spooning days was over, they got married and a year or so after they had a little boy. They called him Jimmy Junior and Mary and Jim set an awful lot of store by him.

Things went along fust-rate for a few years, but when Jim got along to be about six years old he come down with the scarlet fever. They had Dr. Milligan come in to see him and they all thought it weren't going to be serious; but it kept on getting worse and worser and worser and

it weren't many days before things was serious. Mary would just set there by the bed with tears rolling down her face and Jim would pace up and down the floor like a wild animal in a cage, but there weren't nothing they could do what would make that fever go away.

Things went on for a couple of days about as they was, and then one night little Jim started breathing heavy and his hands and face got hotter and hotter with the fever. His pa and ma was setting there and soon as they seen how things was going his pa up and ran for the doctor. Mary set there alone with the little feller and pretty soon he sat right up in bed and looking out the winder at the moon what was shining, he says, "It's an awful pretty moon, ain't it, Ma?"

"Yes, it is, Jim," she says, "but lie down now."

"I don't want to lie down, Ma. I want to look at the moon. Heaven's up behind the moon, ain't it?"

For a moment Mary caught her breath and then she tried to cover him up. "Yes, Jim, it's a real pretty moon."

"Look, Ma," he says, "there's a great big star

in back the moon, and there's fairies flying around it."

"There, there, Jim," she says. "You just think you see them."

"No, I don't. I can see just what they're doing," he says.

"You can't see through the moon, Jimmy," says Mary.

"But can't you see the fairies dancing on the star?" he says kind of disappointed.

"Why, Jim dear, it ain't possible to see them. The moon's in the way and you can't see through it."

"Gee whiz, Ma," he said his face falling; "can't you see nothing except with your eyes?"

When the Doctor got there and commenced to work on little Jim he sent Mary out of the room and she went downstairs to the old-fashioned hair rocker where she used to rock him to sleep. She got down on her hands and knees beside that rocker with tears streaming down her face and for the fust time in her life she saw things what she couldn't see with her eyes and she felt things what she couldn't feel with her hands.

When Henrietta Perkins goes into things she goes. She's just been took into the humane society and the fust thing she done was to go out and wrap some cotton batting around her buggy whip so it would be more comfortable on the horse when she tapped him with it.

When the women folks git the Missionary Barrel bug there ain't nothing for men to do but git out. When women houseclean you can sometimes git your old slippers and ties off the rubbish pile, but when they're collected in the name of the heathen there ain't no recovering them.

A couple of nights ago I got through my milking a mite early so I went out front and clumb in the hammock for a little swing. It's a nice hammock, as hammocks go, and I've got it strung up between the two maple-trees. I kind of feel to home with the trees, 'cause they're a couple that Pa planted there—oh—I guess it must be close to seventy years ago.

Well, sir, as I set there swinging and thinking the twenty-third psalm came to mind. I was thinking of the lines,

> "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
> He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;
> He leadeth me beside the still waters.
> He restoreth my soul."

Them are awful pretty lines to recite to yourself and while I was reciting them I looked across the medder and it come to me how much more the psalm would mean if we was to have some shepherds around Jonesport. When we don't see shepherds from day to day and get to know how peaceful they be, we don't really get the whole meaning from the psalm.

I was sort of churning it over in my mind when all of a sudden I says to myself, "Gracious, sakes, we've got plenty of neighbors in Jonesport and how nice it would be to think of the Lord as being a neighbor."

There's lots of things about neighbors that are just like shepherds. Shepherds have crooks they walk around with, but now you take Sam Tuttle who lives just below us. Sam has a crooked stick with him most the time and the only difference between a shepherd and Sam is they hold the stick by opposite ends. The shepherd lets the crook rest on the ground while Sam holds the crook in his hand and calls it a cane.

I says to myself, the more I thought it over, there ain't a whole lot of difference between neighbors and shepherds anyhow. There's a psalm about shepherds and the fust cousin to a psalm is a hymn, so I guess I'll write a little hymn about Jesus being a neighbor. I'll tell you, it's a real comfortable feeling to live next door to Jesus. It makes living well worth while.

Anyhow, a little thought come to mind and a little tune, so I'm putting it down here for you to kind of think over.

Jesus is my neighbor,
He lives next door to me.
My house is open to Him,
I've given Him the key.
We sit before the fireside,
As happy as can be.
He seems to understand me—
He lives next door to me.

Some folks think just because an owl don't say nothing the owl is a wise old bird. I don't see nothing wise about sitting up in a tree and screeching all night.

I always cal'lated they called them little collection-boxes mite boxes, because when you opened them you might get something and then again you mightn't.

Horace Tibbits was quite a feller. He married Flossy Tucker, the youngest of Old Tim Tucker. You probably remember Old Tim, don't you? Used to live up by the fork in the road?

Well sir, when Horace got Flossy he got his money's worth. There ain't nothing easy-going about her. No sir. When she gets her dander up she can cause more disturbance than twin beehives being upsot in the parlor.

Flossy was one of them women who are sot in her ways and one thing she couldn't get accustomed to was whittling in the sitting room. Horace is kind of absent-minded and he likes to whittle, so he give her plenty of opportunity to exercise her vocal organs.

One day, when she come in, Horace was setting up to the table a whittling and a thinking and there was shavings all over the floor. Flossy stood there looking at them for a couple of minutes and then she run out to the kitchen and grabbed a flat-iron. In about a shake of a lamb's tail she was after Horace, and he went out the door like he'd been shot from an impatient cannon. Around the house they went. It was a

marathon for sure with Horace in the lead.

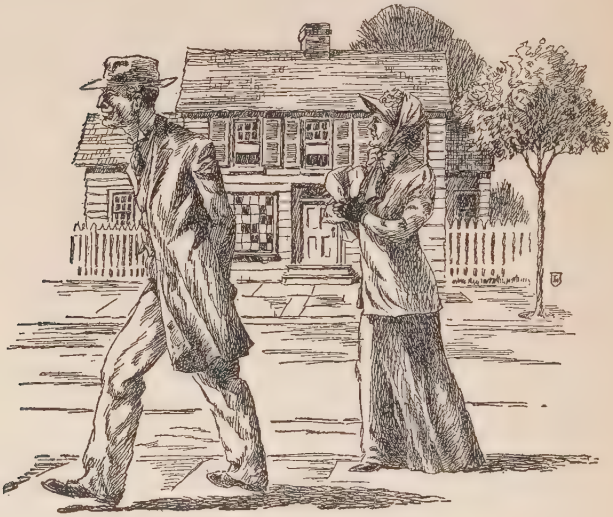
I guess they must have made the circuit about a dozen times before he seen the hen-house door was open, but when he did see it, he shied over and got inside before Flossy could get her hands on him. There was a strap dangling from the hook so he slipped it over the knob and there he was cozy as an egg in a hen's nest.

For hours Flossy stood out in front of the coop pasting the flatiron up agin the door and yelling at Horace if he was a man to come out.

A couple of days later Horace was telling me about it and he says, "Do you think I come out? No siree. I'm the boss of our house and I weren't taking no orders from her."

Last night was one of the best thinking nights we've had for quite a spell. Just enough mosquitoes to keep you from going to sleep and not too many so you couldn't swat them.

There's some husbands who always walk about six steps in front of their wives. If the wives would buy their husbands' shoes a size too small they'd be able to keep up with them.



THE COUNTRY DOCTOR

The kitchen stove was glowing warm, the oven door
stood wide,
The country doctor tilted back and put his feet inside.
The wind around the low-set eaves was blowing with
a roar,
But it was nothing as compared unto the doctor's
snore.

Across the room the doctor's wife had opened up a
book—
A book where she'd made jottings of the trips that he
had took.
Some forty years ago that book had been her hope and
light;
But that was forty years ago and now it's nearly night.

When they were young and full of hope and all the
world seemed gay,
They planned the gorgeous wedding trip that they
would make some day.
They didn't have the money then, but prayed the
gracious Lord
That this same book would bring the things they
couldn't then afford.

Instead of tear there came a smile, for forty years of
life
Had taught her what it meant to be a doctor's wife.
She gently shook him from his sleep, the book she
made him take,
And scolded just about enough to keep him wide
awake.

"Here's Herbert Brown," she pointed out, "you've
seen him every day.
Now how much do you really think you ought to make
him pay?"
The country doctor thought a mite, and stroked his
snow-white hair,
"We'd better charge him nothing, ma, 'cause there's
been sickness there."

She had her pencil in her hand 'cause she knew what
he'd say;
He'd said it over forty years and said it every day.
"Now here's Sam Hooper, he's been sick, it seems like
it was right
To charge him just a little bit, you sat up all night."

The country doctor scratched his head, "I'd charge
him, ma," he said,
"But that confounded gentleman's been awful sick
a-bed."
He thought another moment and twisted in his chair,
"You'd better charge him nothing, ma, cause there's
been sickness there."

"I'll charge him nothing if you say, but here's the
Widder Bost;
You ought to charge her plenty for all the sleep you've
lost.
Why she kept you a-running it from morning until
night.
Let's see yer make a little bill, and charge her just a
mite."

The doctor kind of weakened, it seemed as if he would,
And then he hemmed and hawed a mite and said he
wished he could.

"I'd charge her in a second, ma, if I thought 'twas fair,
But let's not charge her nothing now, 'cause there's been sickness there."

She knew he'd say it just like that; she scribbled out the name.
For over forty years they'd played this understanding game.
She'd read the name and he would try to think perhaps 'twas fair.
But he could never seem to charge when there'd been sickness there.

Their wedding trip is long past due, for doctor and his wife.
The book has grown from page to page with credit due for life.
But when he says those precious words, she doesn't seem to care,
You'd better charge them nothing, ma, 'cause there's been sickness there."

Ben Tuttle is so absent-minded he went down the street the other day walking with one foot in the gutter and the other on the curb. When he got down to the corner he went to the doctor's to see what made him limp.

Life's a good deal like a day. The morning's fust-rate for doing things, then comes the afternoon when you ease up a mite and then comes the evening when you sort of rest and think over what you've done during the day.

There ain't no question but that the churches have lots of hypocrites in them. This ain't nothing agin religion. If you was to counterfeit something you wouldn't counterfeit wrapping paper. You'd counterfeit something what had some value to it.

THE MISSIONARY PLAY

I don't know as I ever told you about the Missionary Play we gave a while ago up here in Jonesport, did I? We don't have theatricals real often, but when we do, folks don't talk of much else for weeks.

The whole thing started when a certain young feller and his wife hove into town. I don't know where they come from and I don't know where they went and I don't expect they'll ever be back and I don't know as I blame them.

You see, it was this way. They went down to a meeting of the Baptist Missionary Society and gave a free speech to the women folks. It seems to me their names was Walton. That's it. Mr. and Mrs. Walton was what they called themselves. Anyhow, they talked to the women folks and got them to thinking that what they ought to do was put on a big show for the purpose of making a lot of money for the heathen.

They appointed a temporary committee to herd all the women to the church and the next day they got together in the town hall to have it out. The Waltons was the speech-makers. They

told all about the poor heathen suffering from colds and not having anything to wear in the matter of clothing, and the long and the short of it was that the women decided to put on a big Missionary show. The Waltons was going to be good enough to do the directing.

I guess this was about the fust time that the females of the religion species of Jonesport ever got together. They appointed three to do the looking after and these was Martha Baxter, the Widder Pease and Minnie Tucker. It was sort of a representative committee. Martha Baxter is married and Minnie Tucker ain't never been and the Widder Pease of course was a has-been. They was religiously diversified too. Martha was Baptist, the Widder Pease clung pretty close to the Methodist church and Minnie Tucker stuck out for the Unitarians.

Some of the real old-timers objected to giving a show in the name of the church, but the ones who was up and coming over-ruled them. They said as long as it was a Missionary Play and the profits was to go to the heathens it was all right. I thought it was a pretty good argument myself and most everybody was won over by it.

Well sir, when the committee got together with the Waltons, things started. It seemed that the Waltons was doing this regular and knew just how to get going. Mrs. Walton weren't a bit hard to look at, but I never did take much of a shine to the husband. He wore one of them collars backside before and when he'd commence to think he'd just set and twiddle his thumbs.

I says to him, "Don't them thumbs of yours ever catch up to one another?"

He stopped twiddling long enough to stick them in his arm sockets and say, "There, there, my dear man, you don't understand."

I cal'late I didn't 'cause how a growed man can set and twiddle and twiddle is more than I can understand. If it was whittling you could see some sense to it.

The fust thing the Waltons done was to get folks to take part in the show. You know how that is. Everybody says as how they ain't got the time, and when they do get in they kick because the part ain't long enough. The Waltons writ down all the names of those needed for Missionaries, and cannibals and stage hands. There was about sixty all told.

"Gracious sakes," says Martha, "there won't

be nobody left to pay admission. We've got to cut down somewheres."

The committee got a pencil and paper and commenced to keep score. They had to count among them not coming those who had babies to home, and when they got through there was two hundred and twenty what could be counted on as attenders.

"At forty cents apiece," says Martha, "that means we won't get more than fifty dollars. We'll have to cut some of these folks out."

The way they finally worked it was to leave thirty out of the show and charge those who were in it twenty cents each.

"It don't seem quite right to me," says the Widder Pease, "to charge the cannibals quite so much as the Missionaries. Ain't we giving the show for the heathen? We'll charge them ten cents and make the Missionaries pay thirty. There's more Missionaries than cannibals so we'll be making more money."

Well, they had to have a head missionary, and after thinking it over they decided there was only one man in town with a long enough beard to be head Missionary. It was Uncle Hosie—and he fitted it to a T.

They had a pretty hard time getting him to do it because he wasn't quite so enthusiastic about heathen as the women folks was. Hosie said he had to get out and scratch for his money and he didn't see why the heathen should get it any easier than him, but the women kept a teasing and a teasing and when the Widder Pease gets a feller cornered he's so thankful she ain't out to marry him that he'll give in to about anything else she has on her mind.

They started rehearsing for the show and the times they had was something you don't forget in a hurry. We used to go down to the town hall every Tuesday and Friday night to see how they were getting on. I guess there must have been as many as a hundred and seventy-five who'd be there, seeing they had relatives in the show. The hardest part of the rehearsing was to teach Hosie to be head Missionary. He'd be making a speech and all the time he'd be

thinking that it was a whole lot of durned foolishness. You couldn't get him to think that he was a missionary. The Walton feller would holler at him, "You're a missionary Mr. Martin, you're a missionary. You're way off in the desert wandering around and there's snakes and poison ones too at your feet. Remember you're a missionary."

"No I ain't neither a missionary," Hosie would say back to him. "and there ain't no poison snakes around here neither 'less Speck Harris forgot to do the sweeping the way he's supposed to. I'll speak my little piece, but I ain't going to wave my arms around."

That was the way with Hosie, but when Tessie Macomb got out on the platform she was certainly in earnest. Yes sir, I wouldn't have been surprised to see her come off the stage all sunburnt from being on the desert. They kept telling you how hot it was until the perspiration would roll down the back of your neck. I suppose that was to keep reminding you that you was with the heathen.

The whole trouble started with the cannibals. When Pete went out on the stage as chief cannibal he set down cross-legged on the floor.

That was the way Minnie Tucker told him to set and he was setting real good too till the Widder Pease come along and told him to sit with his feet out in front of him. Minnie hopped up from her chair where she was setting and said he was to set cross-legged. The Widder said he was to set with his feet out in front of him. Minnie said that was not the way Unitarian cannibals set and the Widder said Methodist cannibals set with their legs out in front of them. They got hotter and hotter and then Minnie said if that was the way Methodist cannibals sat she was through with the show and she wouldn't have nothing more to do with it. She whisked out the front door and I'll be switched if every last Unitarian didn't git right up and go out with her, cannibals, Missionaries and all.

The rest was pretty upsot, but they called a council of war and Martha took the stand and said they was going on with the play and show the Unitarians they weren't the horse and buggy both. She figured it out on pencil and paper and there was only about thirty-eight Unitarians anyhow what was due to come. That meant losing about fourteen dollars.

Well, when the night of the show come along

the hall was full to overflowing. There must have been about ninety folks what come over from Columbia Falls, Machias, Wentworth, East Wentworth and the Center. The committee forgot to figure these extries in so they was what you might call so much added gravy.

Everybody was most tickled to death 'cause it showed the Unitarians weren't making a fizzle of it. I forgot to tell you they had electric lights in the hall. They were put in about six months before by the Republicans. I want you to remember about the electric lights 'cause there's where some of the action comes in.

The fust thing on the bill was Matty Hawks and his orchestra. They toot a pretty good tune too. Matty played the piany and his brother Charlie was at the fiddle. Then there was Manny Pierson at the other fiddle. Lang Puller had his accordion, but the piany was tuned up so high he couldn't get the accordion up to it and he sat most of the evening with his head on one side sounding the keyboard and hoping she'd git up to pitch, but she wouldn't. Sarah Puller, that's Lang's wife, said that when Lang got home he cried like a baby 'cause he couldn't get the accordion to jibe with the piany.

Way in back of the piany was Clif Lufkin. He don't really belong to the orchestra and then again he does. Clif had been practising on the clarinet for twenty years, but being stone deaf he couldn't seem to get the hang of it. He wanted to play at the Missionary Show so bad though they let him, and bad was the way he played all right.

Matty sat him in behind the piany and there were only two notes Clif could hit right. They were C and G. When one of those notes was coming Matty would lean over and give Clif the high sign and Clif would toot her. As soon as he'd see from Matty that one of those chords was coming his way, he'd lock his teeth on the end of that instrument and there weren't no making him let go till all the air inside him had been blowed out.

After the orchestra had done a couple of numbers the next was Jim Fletcher. Jim was the light man and he turned the lights on and off at the right time. He done a good job and it weren't his fault that things turned out as they did.

Prin Baxter was on the curtain. Martha put him there because Prin is her husband and

seeing she was putting in so much work on the show she thought it only right to get him on the cannibal price of ten cents instead of the regular forty cent fare.

Finally the show started. Prin give a tug on the curtain and there was everything all set for action. Ain't it remarkable what you can do on the stage to make it look like some other place. Sam Tuttle had hauled a couple of loads of sand from the beach and there it was all spread out on the stage. Right in the middle of the sand was a sheet held up in the middle by one of Sam's crowbars. Martha's kettle was hanging out in front the tent on three sticks. Of course I knew everything that was coming and so did all the other folks in Jonesport, but it was all new to the folks who came in from outside. You could hear them "um" and "ah" and it was quite pleasing to know they felt they was gitting their money's worth.

Pete and Dick were setting with their backs to us. They were all fixed up with shoe blacking, their hair was curled and they certainly did look a lot like advertisements of heathen you see in the Sunday-school Times.

Then Uncle Hosie come on. He was just as

you see him every day only he had on slippers and carried a long cane that was about eight feet high. That was the Missionary part of him. It didn't ask for the cane in the play, but Martha said no real Missionary ever went walking without one of them poles so they stuck it in for good measure. That's just like Martha. Always sticking in things for good measure, when they don't cost her anything.

The next thing that happened, Hosie put his hand over his eyes, That was to let you know the sun was shining real bright. I said to the Waltons at the last rehearsal that when the sun was shining on the sand there was a lot of brightness reflected up and if Hosie was to put his other hand below his eyes and peek through the crack folks would know the sun was turrible bright, but they said it wouldn't be necessary so he just shaded his eyes from above. Then he said:

"I am a Missionary come from afar,
I follow the path of the evening star,
I search for a heathen that I may save,
I'll teach him to wash and to dress and to shave."

I can't seem to recollect just how the rest of the speech went, but you could tell he was

looking for somebody. He had a peck of trouble not to step on Dick and Pete setting there, for he weren't supposed to know that anybody was around.

Pete and Dick heard what he was saying and they turned around and said over their shoulder, "What are you in search of, white man with the beard?"

It took the Waltons two hours to git those two cannibals so they could say it together. Dick is apt to stutter and Pete had to learn to kick his consonants a little so he'd be in time with Dick.

" 'Tis you I am seeking," says Hosie. "I come from a—a—dog-gone it. I come from a—a—a. Hey Martha, where did I come from?"

"Shush," says Martha sticking her head on the stage and whispering so you could have heard her out in the street. "You come from afar."

"Gracious," says Hosie, "don't it beat all when a feller don't know where he come from. I came from afar in search of souls to mend."

While Hosie was talking Dick and Pete got up and did a little capering. Hosie got them by the ear and pulled them along off with him. It was very exciting.

Then Minnie come on the stage to do her part. She was supposed to be the wife of the Missionary and she was following him.

"The life of a wife of a missionary is a tempestuous one," says she. "Over barren wastes, through briars, over seas of dangerous things, onward, onward, ever onward. There are deep chasms to pass, streams to ford, dangers galore, onward, onward ever onward."

The onward, onward, ever onward, was kind of like a chorus hitched to the rear of each verse. There was a lot more to it, but right in the middle of the show the lights went out.

"Keep still, keep still," hollared Hosie from the platform. "I'm setting up here on the stage and if there ain't no reason for me to get scart you can set still too."

He kept right on calming folks while others tried to fix the lights. Yes sir, folks kind of looked on Hosie as a hero after that. There might have been a stampede or something.

"I told you so," somebody shouted out of the dark and we all knew it was Hiram Peters. Hiram is head of the Jonesport Democrats and he was strong agin the Republicans putting electric lights in the town hall. He said kerosene

lamps stood for simplicity and honesty and we ought to stick by them in this hour of need.

All was quiet for a moment and then you could hear Martha say in a whisper what went all over the place, "Some Unitarian has cut the wire, drat their hides."

"Keep still folks," yelled Hosie, "there ain't nothing to git upsot about. Sam, have you got that new automobile of yours hitched out in front?"

"She's out there" says Sam from the darkness.

"Go out and start her up," says Hosie. "I ain't learnt my lines for nothing. We're going to fix things here so we can go on with the show."

Hosie got Prin and they went out in front, while Matty played the piany to keep all the folks quiet and contented. Sam had the engine of the auto all going so they got two planks and laid them up the steps and into the hall. "Do you think you can drive up them planks," says Hosie.

"I cal'late so," says Sam.

Martha Baxter come a-running out to where they was standing and she was terrible upsot. "Do something quick, men," she said. "Do some-

thing quick. Just think of all them young folks in there alone in the dark."

"Now Marthie," says Hosie, "them young folks is all right. What if a boy does steal a kiss from his girl before we git the lights on."

"You can't tell what young folks is apt to do," she says.

"Speaking from experience?" says Abe Tucker.

"None of your business," she snapped at him, "and besides being a bachelor you don't know nothing about it."

"Maybe so," says Abe, "but I've got a pretty good imagination."

By this time Sam had got the critter turned around and he drove up on the planks into the vestibule. Crash—bang! He didn't pull taut on the wheel quite quick enough and she took the door clean off the hinges.

"Now you've done it, now you've done it," yelled Sarah from the audience.

"I ain't done nothing," yelled back Sam.

"Yes you have, yes you have," yelled Sarah, "I heard you."

"You keep still, I'm fixing the show," he come back with.

The lights was powerful bright and they shone on the platform like it was a real theater. "Better than it was before," says Hosie. "That'll show the Unitarians."

They went on with the show and it was a fust rate one too. Nothing went wrong except Dick got a piece of sand in his eye, but Doctor Tanner was there and he got up on the stage and got it out for him. Hosie said that added a little to the show 'cause with so much sand around cannibals must have the same trouble, seeing they sat in it so much.

Just as it was over they got the lights to working and folks could see to git out. The committee stayed afterwards though to count the money and see how much they'd made.

"Where's the money?" says Martha.

"I give it to the Waltons to keep," says Tessie Brown. Tessie was custodian of the gate receipts.

To make a long story short nobody has seen the money or the Waltons since. The only thing I ever heard was that Martha had a dream and she was a cannibal and et one of them. She was turrible mad.

FINIS